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THE OPERATIONAL DEEP GROUND ATTACK:
POTENTIAL AND IMPLICATIONS

by

Kevin S. Woods

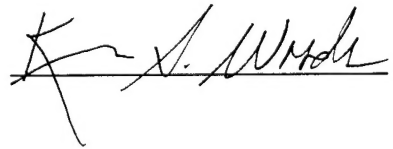
MAJ, U.S. Army

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15. Abstract: The Cold War battlefield of Europe is gone, and the US military, while wrestling with its future roles and missions, may find that some concepts needed for tomorrow's wars can be found by dusting off old theories once deemed inapplicable or unfeasible. The operational deep ground attack is one such concept. The operational deep ground attack, comparable to the Russian Operational Maneuver Group(OMG), is a concept of maneuvering division and corps size units deep into the enemy's operational rear area with the intent of psychologically dislocating the enemy, destroying critical operational targets, and bringing rapid defeat to the enemy. This concept still holds immense value for today's warfighting CINC. However, to be able to execute such a complex mission, US forces need to study and test its principles, add detail to existing doctrine, and review the leadership, training, and logistical demands that seem unique enough to render the concept beyond the capability of today's combat forces. The purpose of this paper is to examine the concept of the operational deep ground attack; determine whether doctrine sufficiently addresses its conditions; and review potential implications for making it a viable mission for the operational commander.			
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"Doctrine, after all, is dynamic. It must be reflective of constantly changing strategic and tactical environments, and the operational art, whose job it is to connect the two, must be responsive to these changes."¹

Future war has no shortage of seers and clairvoyants. The Cold War battlefield of Europe is gone and the U.S. military, while wrestling with its future roles and missions, may find that some of those concepts needed for tomorrow's wars can be found by dusting-off old theories and reexamining ideas once deemed inapplicable or unfeasible. The operational deep ground attack (ODGA) is one such concept. The ODGA, comparable to the Russian's Operational Maneuver Group (OMG), is the concept of maneuvering division or corps-size units deep into the enemy's rear area with the intent of psychologically dislocating the enemy, destroying critical operational targets, and bringing rapid defeat to the enemy. This concept still holds immense value for today's warfighting CINC. However, to be able to execute such a complex mission, U.S. forces need to study and test its principles, add detail to existing doctrine, and review the leadership, training, and logistical demands that appear unique enough to render the ODGA concept beyond the capability of today's combat forces. The purpose of this paper is to examine the concept of ODGA; determine whether our doctrine sufficiently addresses its conditions; and review potential implications in making it a viable mission for the operational commander.

The theory of conducting an operational-level ground attack deep into the enemy's rear area with a force capable of high

¹ James McDonough, "The Operational Art", Maneuver Warfare, ed. Richard D. Hooker, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1993), 109

momentum and overwhelming combat power is a potent warfighting concept. Based on sound warfighting principles, its essence is anchored in the genius of Sun Tzu's Confucian thought, Kahn's Mongol rampage through Europe, Liddell-Hart's indirect approach, the Wehrmacht blitzkrieg of WWII, and scores of other historical illustrations and enduring theories. It is a forceful concept of maneuver that grasps and exploits the principle of momentum and surprise. Its objective is the psychological dislocation of the enemy, the crushing of his will, and rapid victory.

The operational deep ground attack is a simple theory, yet its simplicity belies its complexity in execution. Its strength as a theory has long been known and appreciated by U.S. military leaders, however, U.S. military leaders differ greatly on whether its execution is a capability within the scope of our divisions or corps. Too be sure, until recently its demands on command and control (C2) and logistics seemed to exceed the capabilities of modern U.S. forces; moreover, its risks were unnecessary given the mission of defending Europe against the USSR and the potential of a nuclear battlefield. It is risky when compared to its alternative of the straight-forward, predictable calculus of pure-attrition battle. Nevertheless, with its risk comes opportunity for high payoffs.

To begin, the doctrinal term "deep operations" can have a multiple of meanings and therefore requires a short definition in order to avoid confusion. When referring to the term "deep", various spatial constructs are possible. The typical differences between definitions are usually partially resolved by pinpointing what level of war is being discussed: tactical, operational, or strategic. Unfortunately, the terms "deep battle" or "deep

operations" are scarcely used in the joint publications, so for clarity this paper will follow the definition from FM 100-5, Operations. Deep operations are those "operations designed in depth to secure advantages in later engagements, protect the close fight, and defeat the enemy more rapidly by denying freedom of action and disrupting or destroying the coherence and tempo of his operations."²

Furthermore, *tactically deep* and *operationally deep* are two distinct areas that must be mentally separated. In his monograph, *Tactical and Operational Depth*, Charles L. Crow defined *tactical depth* as that area defined by the dimensions of the units defending it. It is the area occupied by defending units who, because of their mission or capabilities, are restricted in their freedom of maneuver and are tied to a cohesive framework that is defined by its relationship to the direct defensive fight. Their continued occupation of this theoretical confine maintains the integrity and continuity of the defense and thereby denies the attacker the opportunity to destroy or disrupt the mass of the defending forces by maneuver. The Russians estimate the tactical depth as a distance of approximately 40-50 kilometers back from the frontline.³

Operational depth is that area beyond the tactical depth in which both the defender and attacker can achieve freedom of maneuver. It is the position that, if gained by the attacker,

² FM 100-5, Operations, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1993, G-2.

³ COL David M. Glantz, Deep Attack: The Soviet Conduct of Operational Deep Maneuver (SASO, US Army CAC Center, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1987), 125.

provides the opportunity to destroy or disrupt the integrity of the defense without engaging the majority of the defensive forces.⁴ These areas, tactical and operational depth, although separate in space and time, remain tied to each other and expand and contract as the attacker pushes into the defender's depth and the defender adds additional forces to his defense.

In War and Anti-war, the Toffler's prophecy of the battlefield front vanishing as weapon capabilities take the battle deeper and deeper is hardly surprising to any student of war.⁵ More important than the vanishing front will be the phenomenon of the empty battlefield. Weapon ranges and increased mobility will transform tactical defenses into widely dispersed clusters; dispersed for security and protection, and when called upon, rapidly massed for effect. However, deep fires and the empty battlefield have not brought the end to the linear theater. Forces engaged in war require secure areas at every echelon and, at a minimum, secure lines connecting fighting forces to those areas. Even the amorphous clusters predicted for the future high-tech battlefield, or the guerilla fighting of future insurgencies, will need a logic to their dispositions, maybe not on the tactical battlefield, but certainly within the theater. The operational deep ground attack aims to exploit the linear theater by swiftly pushing decisive firepower beyond enemy lines and into the enemy's heart.

The significance of defining tactical and operational depth

⁴ Charles L. Crow, "Tactical and Operational Depth," School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS.: May 1986).

⁵ Alvin and Heidi Toffler, War and Anti-War, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1993), 67-69.

lies with the idea of *freedom of maneuver*. Saddled between these two areas lies the pivotal threshold in which the attacker, after crossing over, significantly increases his hold on the initiative, gains the opportunity to set new objectives, and at a minimum, psychologically dislocates the defender. The defender, in order to control the battle and capitalize on the advantages afforded to defensive battle, must execute the fight on his chosen terrain. This applies whether the defense is forward or arrayed in depth. To fight anywhere other than on the terrain chosen by the defender snatches away the defender's primary advantage and hands to the attacker all initiative by allowing the attacker to control not only time, but also space. This is the strength of the ODGA concept. For the attacking army, gaining the advantage of freedom of maneuver is a means to an operational end. Since battle within the tactical depth is seldom anything other than attritional, and normally will not lead to complete destruction of an enemy superior in numbers, the attacker must employ maneuver as his passkey to operational success.

The deep operational formation(DOF) conducting an operational deep ground attack uses maneuver as its primary weapon. General Don Starry, in his forward to Richard Simpkin's book, Race to the Swift, poses this broad question about battle, "What does win?" Of all the possible answers, Starry does not hedge around with watered down generalizations. His answer to the question:

"By far the majority of winners in battle in which the beginning force ratios are generally within... "reasonable limits"... were those who somehow seized the initiative from the enemy, and held it to the battle's end. Most often the initiative was successfully seized and held by *maneuver*. This seems to be true whether defending or attacking,

outnumbered or outnumbering."⁶

Although the concept of the ODGA has many parents, it is only right to give most the credit for its modern development to the Soviet, now Russian, military. The development of the modern deep battle is considered by many to be the product of Russian military thought and more specifically the brainchild of two Tsar-ist trained officers, Triandafillov and Tukhachevskii. The former being the intellectual force behind the theory and the latter being the one who fully comprehended the power of the theory and was able to transpose it into Russian doctrine, organization, and training. Unfortunately for the WWII Soviet army, its potential was never fully realized. Stalin saw Tukhachevskii as a threat and in 1937 had him executed as part of the purge that reduced the Soviet military by 20 to 35 percent.⁵ With Tukhachevskii gone, the proponents of positional warfare effectively inserted their influences over Soviet strategy. This predictable strategy was based on defensive fortification and maintenance of territorial position. The consequence of these misguided actions was a Soviet military attempting to rework its doctrinal strategy when WWII broke-out; they were caught unprepared to execute any strategy with competence.

The Russian military takes full credit for the theory of deep operations and consider it their most outstanding achievement in military-theoretical thought.⁷ They do, however, go too far when

⁶ Richard E. Simpkin, Race to the Swift: Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare, (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1985), x.

⁷ Earl F. Ziemke, "The Soviet Theory of Deep Operations", Parameters, Vol XIII, No 2, June 1983, 24.

they make the claim in The History of Soviet Military Thought to have "discovered first" the theoretical principles of modern mobile warfare.⁸ But where the idea first originated is not nearly as important as its development, and at present no one country has contributed more to the concept than Russia. In the late seventies the Soviets, recovering from Premier Khrushchev's nuclear battlefield doctrine, once again took seriously the Truhachevskii's pre-WWII deep operation theory. From this new thinking was born the Russian doctrinal Operational Maneuver Group⁹--their embodiment of the operational deep ground attack.

In 1982, C.N. Donnelly, a noted Soviet expert, authored an article about the OMG and caused a flurry of interest among NATO military leaders and writers. The Soviets had put theory into action. The deep operational ground attack was new enough, different enough, and harbored enough real threat, that NATO's defense capability was being questioned. The rumors were enough to bring a public address by the then SACEUR, General Bernard Rogers, confirming the validity of Donnelly's article, and further reassuring all interested that NATO was not caught off guard. Interestingly, the U.S. Army shortly thereafter underwent a fundamental shift to what became the AirLand Battle doctrine.

WHAT IS THE THEORY BEHIND THE OPERATIONAL DEEP GROUND ATTACK?

The operational deep ground attack is a concept of employing

⁸ Ibid., 31.

⁹ Note: In order to minimize confusion in changing terms, and to maintain focus on the broader concept, I have used the term ODGA even when referenced authors were referring to the Russian OMG. When key to the context of the statement the term OMG will be used.

existing forces to better exploit enemy vulnerabilities. The ODGA concept is to attack a defending force across a broad front while concentrating forces at particular point(s) of weakness in order to force a penetration and allow a large mobile force to rapidly push deep into the enemy's operational depth. (see fig. 1, app. A) To accomplish this, the ODGA order of battle is based on the existence of two forces each with unique missions and each dependent on the success of the other for overall success. These two forces will be called the *holding force* and the *mobile force*.

The holding force has two tasks. First, it must penetrate the enemy's defensive line and clear a path through the tactical depth of the enemy. This breach allows the mobile force to pass through and gain freedom of maneuver. Generally this is accomplished while engaging the enemy simultaneously throughout the width and depth of the defense. The holding force must engage the enemy's front in order to limit tactical repositioning while fighting tactically deep to attrit and delay uncommitted enemy assets. Because the operational commander is focused beyond the tactical fight, and is most interested in putting his main decisive force beyond tactical depth, he is largely free to select the point(s) of penetration that offer the greatest chance of success (often unit or coalition boundaries). By acting operationally, the commander effectively marginalizes the enemy's tactical defense.

The ODGA is a rapid, maneuver-oriented fight, however, the tactical penetration remains a brute-force attrition battle where numbers and firepower continue to play the largest role. Even with the element of surprise, executing and holding an opening in which to pass the mobile force may require an additional force

(the Soviet second echelon) to complete the penetration out to operational depth. For the Russians, this penetration was important enough to commit the OMG (mobile force) itself if necessary to secure a break through. After the stalemate battles of WWI, J.F.C. Fuller in his book, Armored Warfare, pointed out that the fundamental difficulty in maintaining a continuity of advance in a penetration is hostile flank pressure more than hostile frontal pressure.¹⁰ Fuller proposed a geometrical solution. Basing his theory on WWI data, Fuller believed that the lane penetrated through the enemy's defense must begin wide enough so as to allow for a inward sloping angle of 45 degrees. (see figure 2, app. A) Of course, the specific geometry is less important than the basic point that the longer the penetration, such as required for a tactical defense-in-depth, the greater the pressure of it collapsing on itself.

The second task of the holding force is to hold the enemy in place while the mobile force drives hard toward the enemy's depth. This task is the foundation of the ODGA concept. As the mobile force passes the enemy's defensive center, a new tension begins to work upon the enemy's defensive purpose and increases as the mobile force further distances itself from the holding force. The enemy begins to feel the psychological dislocation of being torn between two pulling forces. It is a lose-lose situation for the defender. To turn and pursue the mobile force requires him to risk rupturing the integrity of the entire defense, opens further exploitable opportunities for the holding force, and exposes his vulnerabilities as he unearths to pursue.

¹⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, Armored Warfare, (Harrisburg, PA: The Military Publishing Co., 1943), 182.

However, not turning is equally fraught with danger. A large tank-heavy force moving rapidly through the enemy's soft operational underbelly cannot go unchallenged. The holding force exploits this dilemma by fighting harder. Interestingly, this works because the harder the fighting the more difficult it is for either force to disengage themselves. In this unique fight, the holding force fights the enemy to hold them as much as to attrit them.

The mobile force or deep operational force is a highly mobile, heavily armored, self-contained force typically the size of an U.S. Army division or corps. Its primary purpose is to first gain freedom of maneuver at operational depth then drive deep as rapidly as possible. Simpkin considers the distance between the holding force(H) and the mobile force(M), and the momentum of the mobile force as critical to his concept of leverage. Both forces are operationally "hinged" together. The distance acts as the lever arm. The mobile force, as measured by its momentum, becomes the force applied against the lever arm. The result is a tremendous psychological force on the enemy.(see figure 3, app. B) This force has effect even before the DOF engages any objectives. Like A.T. Mahan's *fleet-in-being*, the fact that the mobile force exists at operational depth is itself a powerful force against the enemy's will to continue. The DOF commander, once he attains freedom of maneuver, will use his force to attack operational objectives such as: HQ sites, transportation networks, nuclear launch sites, airfields, or the enemy's operational reserve. In many cases the commander will use the DOF as a launch platform for smaller elements to conduct raids against operationally critical nodes. Moreover, the DOF

commander is freed considerably from the friction of the terrain since he may now choose the path of least resistance to reach objectives. Conversely, the enemy pursuing this DOF has very little flexibility in choosing the axis on which to follow and attack. The DOF holds the initiative.

To ensure the DOF can reach its necessary depth, it must move as a robust combined arms element bringing with it infantry, aviation, engineers, self-propelled artillery, air defense, and massive fixed-wing support. Heavy intelligence collection efforts will guide its movements with airborne and air assault operations also facilitating momentum by seizing priority road nets, dangerous defiles, bridges, and other potential obstacles.

In describing the characteristics of the Soviet OMG, C.N. Donnelly put forth some of the advantages of an operational deep ground attack.¹¹

- * It is an operational tool that confers genuine flexibility on the operational commander.
- * It turns tactical success into operational success.
- * It brings continuity to the operation by avoiding operational pauses that may allow the enemy to recover or use nuclear weapons.
- * Rapid seizure of operational objectives regardless of the tactical situation.
- * It is an excellent synthesizing of the often difficult combination of airborne, air assault, special forces, and mechanized forces.
- * Reduces the possible use of nuclear weapons since detonation

¹¹ C.N. Donnelly, "The Soviet OMG: A New Challenge for NATO", International Defense Review, No. 9, 1982, 1177.

would occur in enemy's own area.

Conversely, Henry Shields pointed to the possible exploitable weaknesses in his examination of the OMG.¹²

- * Will it be able to maintain an overland supply link with its main body forces?
- * In a related area, will replenishment of ammunition be adequate, especially for air defense weapons guarding against the potential of heavy air attacks?
- * Can it avoid decisive engagements with reserve forces?
- * Will battlefield damage, such as destroyed bridges, take away its greatest asset--momentum?
- * Can command and control be maintained with follow-on main forces?

Charles Dick echoed these same doubts about the OMG and added:

- * Can all the necessary combat support be synchronized with such a high tempo operation?
- * Do the Russians have the leadership necessary for vast initiative and independent action?¹³

Like the OMG, the ODGA is a unique operation designed to exploit certain operational conditions. It promises to capitalize on the Army's modern mechanization and digitization by bringing large gains in operational objectives, but like all operations, the ODGA offers advantages and risks that must

¹² Henry S. Shields, "Why the OMG?" Military Review, November 1985, 8-9.

¹³ Charles J. Dick, "Soviet Operational Concepts-Part I", Military Review, September 1985, 43-44.

ultimately be decided by the circumstances and the operational commander on the ground. With the above description and accompanying pros and cons, the final question remains whether the U.S. military, if called upon, can execute this operational concept.

Implications for the U.S. military

Is the concept of an ODGA or OMG contained in current U.S. Army doctrine? Major James A. Marks sought to answer this exact question in an article he published while a student at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.¹⁴ Of course, his thesis raises the question: If the OMG is in our doctrine, why do we need an article to prove it? Nevertheless, his conclusion was correct, the OMG, or more accurately the ODGA, is within U.S. Army doctrine, however, his proof is based on a somewhat limited and overreaching interpretation of doctrine. While he came to the correct conclusion, he missed the larger point. Yes, in a broad sense U.S. Army doctrine is flexible enough to allow for divisions or corps to conduct operationally deep attacks, but nowhere is it specifically stated. Of the three main doctrinal sources, FM 100-5 Operations, FM 100-15 Corps Operations, and FM 71-100 Division Operations, none address the attack as a deep operational mission. All three manuals do, as Marks found, discuss two concepts that share attributes with the ODGA: deep operations and exploitation. But these terms, as used in doctrine and quoted by Marks, specifically connote actions within the tactical depth of the battlefield--not operational depth.

¹⁴ James A. Marks, "OMG in U.S. Army Doctrine", Military Review, June 1989, 38-42.

The shortcoming of current Army doctrine is not in what is says, but in what is does not say. It is broad enough to encompass the ODGA concept, but it never clearly presents it as a possible operational action. Deep operations is repeatedly discussed, but unless you are intentionally looking to find sanction for the ODGA, you will instead find deep operations focused at the tactical level. In FM 100-5 Operations, the offensive deep operations paragraph begins by discussing its tactical application, and although it seems it will expand its application to the operational level, it does not.

"At the tactical level commanders design operations in depth to secure advantages in later engagements and to protect the force... Typical deep operations include interdiction by ground and air maneuver and fires, either singly or in combination; deep surveillance and target acquisition; and C³CM."¹⁵

This is the case throughout the three manuals; deep operations are viewed in light of their application to the tactical close fight.

Marks also believes the exploitation mission of U.S. forces to be analogous to the ODGA mission. This is incorrect. Without reading between doctrinal lines, the exploitation mission in most cases is a continuation of the successful attack. Unlike the detailed planning required for the specific ODGA, the exploitation mission is opportunity driven, "Commanders normally designate exploiting forces by fragmentary orders issued during an attack."¹⁶ The ODGA sets out to create its opportunity from the beginning.

¹⁵ FM 100-5, 7-13.

¹⁶ Ibid., 7-9.

Does doctrine that allows for the ODGA need to go any further? Do we need it to be prescriptive with a specific doctrinal name and description, or is the ODGA simply a matching of various actions culminating in a course of action? If the ODGA is already in doctrine (implied, but unnamed) then an operational commander who decides to execute such a mission views it as a course of action. This seems minimally acceptable, and it certainly passes the common sense test, however, is doctrine doing its job? The same argument could be made, for example, against the doctrinal maneuver form *frontal attack*. Even without a doctrinal name, the *frontal attack* could still be a course of action. Plenty of armies have conducted it throughout history, and most never saw a written description of it.

So why bother adding more doctrine? Why bother naming, or at least describing, the ODGA? Peter Paret accurately answers the question when he suggests three positive roles for the uses of theory: utilitarian, cognitive, and pedagogic. Utilitarian in its ability to facilitate the execution of the activity it describes. Cognitive in its role of promoting understanding and establishing a comprehensive description of the timeless essential that make up the theory. And most importantly, pedagogic in its ability to establish constructs in which further learning and exploration can transpire.¹⁷ The Russians understand this and have written extensively on the application of their OMG. To gain ownership over the ODGA concept, the U.S. Army should do no less.

¹⁷ Peter Paret, "The Genesis of War", "Introduction to Carl von Clausewitz", On War, ed. and trans, by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 11.

Implications

When debating the potential and capabilities of the ODGA, pessimists commonly point to three obstacles which hold particular weight in dooming any hope of today's U.S. forces executing the ODGA. These three areas are: logistics, training, and leadership. These areas, far from being all inclusive, warrant special attention because of the significant role they play in the ODGA.

Logistics

There can be no operational art without the hard logistical numbers to back it up. In 1986, COL William Brinkley wrote a practical article for the Military Review that specifically addressed the possibility of the U.S. Army conducting an ODGA mission against the old Soviet military. His article, "The Cost Across the FLOT", surmised that based on logistics the ODGA was not possible. Referring to it as a "throwaway force" COL Brinkley concludes, "... the US Army is neither structured nor manned to adequately support this concept. The inability to logistically support the force while simultaneously fighting the FLOT and rear battles could easily produce another "Little Bighorn".¹⁸

COL Brinkley was correct, given the military's logistical capabilities of ten years ago and the numerical superiority of the Soviets, an ODGA was not feasible--at least not initially. The two big logistical sticking points were class III (POL) and

¹⁸ William A. Brinkley, "Across the FLOT", Military Review, September 1986, 30-41.

class V (ammunition). COL Brinkley estimated that to fuel a division operating 350 kilometer deep for seven days would demand a secured forward airfield and 354 daily C-130 sorties. To sustain this same division with class V he estimated 15,232 short tons. Both these massive demands would quickly drain the DISCOM and COSCOM transport assets. Moreover, he asserted it was improbable that LOC's could even be kept open to execute this supply requirement.¹⁹

Major General Wheeler, addressing the same topic, raised additional logistical C2 considerations necessary to support an ODGA mission. His conclusion, however, was slightly more optimistic than COL Brinkley's. MG Wheeler saw the potential of the ODGA, and understood that the US Army has "more conceptual work to do" before it can logistically execute it.²⁰ Both MG Wheeler and COL Brinkley have challenged the ODGA concept and both confirmed one necessary truth: the ODGA is new enough and complex enough that only hands on study and training will give us the underpinning necessary to add it to our mission list and execute it in war. The military is no longer confined to COL Wheeler's European battlefield, and the nature of tomorrow's enemy and battlefield are far from known; consequently, military leaders do not have the luxury of ignoring any potential doctrinal weapon that may be of use in our future arsenal.

Training

The requirement to train needs no justification. As

¹⁹ Ibid., 33-35.

²⁰ MG Albin G. Wheeler, "Operational Logistics in Support of the Deep Attack", Military Review, February 1986, 12-19.

stated earlier, the ODGA is simple in theory, but difficult in execution. The command and control required to move a heavy division is significant. A mechanized division has over 5,100 vehicles and burns over 200,000 gallons of fuel every ten hours. Even without march serial spacing, a heavy division moving in a single column with 100 meter intervals between vehicles stretches more than 500 kilometers. This same division moving on four routes at 30 kph takes five hours to pass a single point.²¹ Add to these C2 challenges the scenario painted by Luttwark, "...in rapid-paced actions, opportunistic routing is de rigueur and the breakdown of formations into ad hoc battle groups is virtually routine..."²² This is far from normal operations for most U.S. Army units.

Apart from the basic command and control difficulty, units must also train to inculcate a much different frame of reference for their small unit leaders. Leaders must come to understand the need to gain and maintain momentum will often supersede target destruction. In this flexible and adapting unit, discipline will become critical to overcoming the inevitable friction of deep maneuver. Only through training will the U.S. Army transcend theorizing and begin to develop and refine the tactics, techniques, and procedures that the ground commander needs to win.

²¹ LTC Edward Arnold, "Moving a Heavy Division", Military Review, July 1988, 35-49.

²² Edward N. Luttwark, "The Operational Level of War", International Security, Winter 1980-81, 78.

Leadership

Lastly, is the always critical factor of leadership. Good tactics follow good leadership. Contrary to some opinions, the concept of mission orders (or Auftragstaktik) is not lost on today's Army. Decentralized command, initiative, and aggressive and bold actions, although not prevalent in garrison, is alive and flourishing in today's training battlefields. But is this enough?

The friction of war comes from war's many uncertainties. For the ODGA some of these uncertainties are not difficult to predict. For example, the larger the formation, and the more the working parts, the greater the friction. The more mechanized the force, the more the friction. The more movement is required, the more friction is generated. And the greater the danger, like the ODGA behind enemy lines, the more source of friction will be human generated. War "is bound by a chain of human infirmity"²³

In action, the ODGA will need to capitalize on its flexibility and momentum, take advantage of its unconstrained lines of operations and objectives, and use its initial momentum to crush and sweep through the minor frictions that can grind operations to a plodding march. However, all these actions must derive their substance from the will of the commander.

Clausewitz defined the problem of friction and the solution to go with it.

"...once conditions become difficult, as they must when much is at stake, things no longer run like a well-oiled machine. The machine begins to resist, and the commander needs tremendous will-power to overcome this resistance. ... As each man's strength gives out, as it no longer responds to his will, the

²³ Clausewitz, On War, bk.III, ch. 16.

inertia of the whole gradually comes to rest on the commander's will alone. The ardor of his spirit must rekindle the flame of purpose in all the others, his inward fire must revive their hope."²⁴

The Soviets understood the unique qualifications necessary for their OMG commanders. Knowing this, Chris Bellamy went as far as to suggest looking at the leadership within the Soviet OMG in order to help identify what Soviet unit might be tasked for the OMG mission.²⁵ The ODGA mission will require leaders at each echelon of the highest caliber; grounded in the science of war, they must be imbued with a daring confidence and an intuitive sense of the battlefield. The Army's leadership, in order to groom this kind of leadership, must encourage and expect it in its training, and reward it when it is demonstrated. Moreover, care must be taken to build this kind of leadership on a foundation of solid theory and experience while resisting the conventional temptation to quash the inevitable panache that comes with this style of leadership. A hesitant, timid manager, unnerved by chaos and disorder, will find no followers in the demanding ODGA mission.

Conclusion

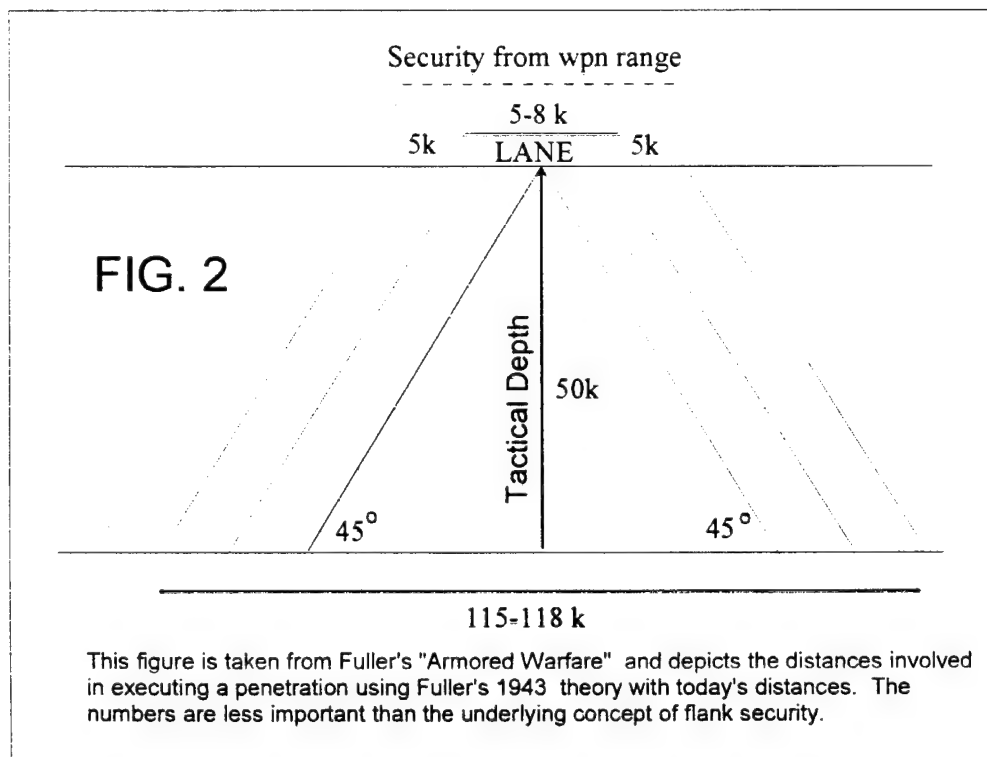
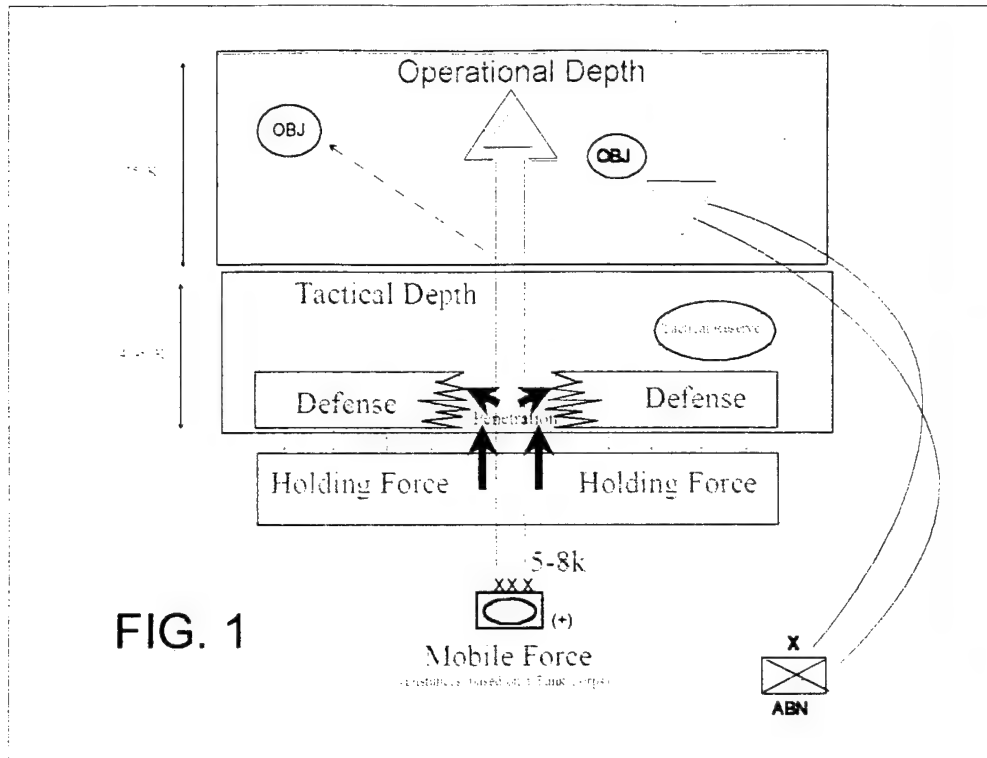
In the end, however, it is well to remember the counsel of Huba Wass de Czege (one of the primary authors of AirLand Battle doctrine) that there can be no easy formulas for achieving

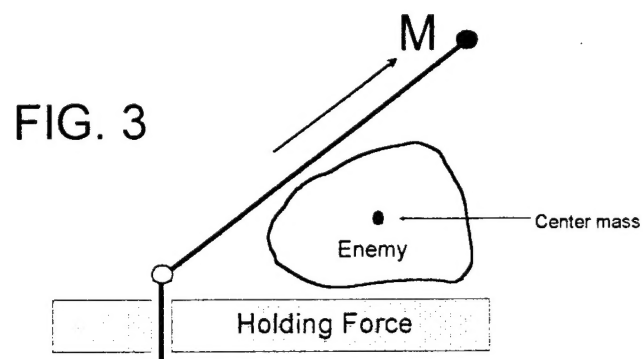
²⁴ Ibid., bk I, ch 3.

²⁵ Chris Bellamy, "Antecedents of the Modern Soviet Manoeuvre Group (OMG)", RUSI, September 1984, 57.

victory in our nation's wars.²⁶ Like the quote that began this paper, prudence demands that we periodically reexamine our doctrine and capabilities in the shifting light of changing military threats and technological advancements. The ODGA is an accepted and sound concept. It has been acknowledged by the military, then placed to the side as greater issues of urgency have arisen. Whether it deserves any change in status is a question requiring study--until then the operational commander must continue to consider it only a theory.

²⁶ Huba Wass de Czege, "Army Doctrinal Reform," in Asa Clark et al., The Defense Reform Debate (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 101-120.





As Simpkin explains, like a nut in a nutcracker, once the M-force passes the enemy's center of mass, the enemy loses the initiative and is effectively locked in the vise of two levered forces.

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